

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 7 and 8, amend claims 1, 2, 6, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23 and 25 and add new claims 26 - 28 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A protective package for ~~an elongated medical device~~ a catheter, comprising:

a protective sheath including a lumen sized to removably protect a catheter before use, the sheath having a length corresponding to a length of a catheter to be received therein and an inner diameter slightly greater than an outer diameter of a catheter to be received therein, ~~receive a body of the elongated medical device wherein a first end of the sheath is being adapted to receive a distal end of the elongated medical device~~ a catheter to be received therein and a second end of the sheath is being adapted to receive a proximal end of the elongated medical device a catheter to be received therein; and

a hydration opening into the lumen disposed between the first and second ends of the sheath so that a desired proportion of a flushing fluid introduced into the lumen near a middle of the sheath and so that a desired proportion of flow thereinto is directed toward the first and second ends of the sheath with a first flow stream extending from the hydration opening to the distal end of the catheter and a second flow stream extending from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the catheter.

2. (Currently Amended) The protective package according to claim 1, wherein the sheath is formed as a hoop and ~~wherein the medical device is a catheter.~~
3. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, further comprising a protective assembly disposed at the first end of the sheath, the protective assembly being adapted to maintain a desired shape of the distal end of the catheter.
4. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, further comprising a luer attached to the sheath in fluid contact with the lumen, the luer defining the hydration opening.
5. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, further comprising

an adapter coupled to the hydration opening for receiving a syringe.

6. (Currently Amended) The protective package according to claim 3, wherein the protective assembly is adapted to prevent damage to a curvature of the distal end of the elongated medical device catheter.
7. (Cancelled).
8. (Cancelled).
9. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, wherein the hydration opening is adapted to divide a flow of the fluid thereinto to achieve a desired ratio of fluid flow at the first end to fluid flow at the second end.
10. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 9, wherein the desired ratio is one to one.
11. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, wherein the hydration opening is substantially equidistant from the first and second ends.
12. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 1, wherein the hydration opening is oriented to direct an amount of flow toward the first end which is different than an amount of flow directed toward the second end.
13. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 12, wherein the hydration opening is positioned so that, the difference in the amounts of flow toward the first and second ends achieves a desired ratio of fluid flow at the first end to fluid flow at the second end.
14. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 13, wherein the desired ratio is one to one.
15. (Currently Amended) A catheter kit comprising:

a catheter having a shaped distal tip distal end and a proximal end; and

a catheter packaging comprising:

a tubular enclosure removably protecting the catheter before use,  
the tubular enclosure having a length ~~and an inner diameter~~ corresponding  
respectively; to a length and outer diameter of the catheter and an inner  
diameter defining a lumen that is slightly greater than an outer diameter of  
the catheter; a first end of the tubular enclosure being adapted to receive  
the ~~shaped distal tip~~ distal end and; a second end of the tubular enclosure  
being adapted to receive a the proximal end of the catheter; and

a hydration opening extending into ~~an interior of the tubular~~  
~~enclosure~~ the lumen between the first and second ends ~~thereof of the~~  
tubular enclosure, the hydration opening being positioned so that a desired  
proportion of flow ~~thereinto of a flushing fluid introduced into the lumen~~  
enters the lumen near a middle of the enclosure and is directed toward the  
first and second ends of the enclosure such that a first flow stream extends  
from the hydration opening to the distal end of the catheter and a second  
flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the  
catheter.

16. (Currently Amended) The catheter kit according to claim 15, further comprising a protective structure disposed at the first end, the protective structure maintaining a desired curvature of the a shaped distal tip of the catheter.
17. (Previously Presented) The catheter kit according to claim 15, wherein the tubular enclosure is coiled to form a hoop.
18. (Previously Presented) The catheter kit according to claim 15, wherein a hydrating fluid introduced into the tubular enclosure via the hydration opening is divided such that the proximal end and the distal end of the catheter are substantially equally hydrated.
19. (Previously Presented) The catheter kit according to claim 15, wherein the catheter is a micro-catheter with a shaped distal tip.
20. (Previously Presented) The catheter kit according to claim 15, wherein the hydration

opening is substantially equidistant between the first and second ends.

21. (Currently Amended) A protective package for removably receiving an elongated medical device, comprising:

a protective sheath including a lumen sized to tightly fit ~~a body of the elongated medical device~~ to be removably received therein to protect the elongated device before use, the sheath having a length corresponding to a length of the medical device and an inner diameter slightly greater than an outer diameter of the elongated device, a first end of the sheath being adapted to receive a distal end of the elongated medical device and a second end of the sheath being adapted to receive a proximal end of the elongated medical device; and

a hydration opening ~~disposed between the first and second ends of the sheath into the lumen near a middle of the sheath~~ so that a desired proportion of a flushing fluid supplied to the sheath via the hydration opening is directed toward the first and second ends of the sheath with a first flow stream extending from the hydration opening to the distal end of the elongated device and a second flow stream extending from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the elongated device is provided to the first and second ends of the sheath.

22. (Currently Amended) The protective package according to claim 21, wherein a portion of the lumen for receiving a distal end of the ~~body of the elongated medical device~~ is curved in a manner complimenting a preformed curve of the distal end of the medical device.

23. (Currently Amended) The protective package according to claim 21, wherein a first portion of the lumen for receiving a distal end of the ~~body of the elongated medical device~~ has a first diameter different than a second diameter of a second portion of the lumen for receiving a proximal end of the ~~body of the elongated medical device~~, the differences in the diameters of the first and second portions corresponding to differences in diameter between the proximal and distal portions of the ~~body of the elongated medical device~~.

24. (Previously Presented) The protective package according to claim 21, wherein the first diameter is less than the second diameter.

25. (Currently Amended) The protective package according to claim 21, further comprising a reinforced end of a first portion of the lumen for receiving a distal end of the body of the elongated medical device to protect the distal end of the body of the elongated medical device.

26. (New) A protective package for removably receiving an elongated medical device, comprising:

a protective sheath including a lumen sized to tightly fit a body of the elongated medical device to be received therein, the sheath removably protecting the elongated medical device before use, a first end of the sheath being adapted to receive a distal end of the elongated medical device and a second end of the sheath being adapted to receive a proximal end of the elongated medical device, a length of the sheath corresponding to a length of the elongated medical device and an inner diameter of the lumen being slightly greater than an outer diameter of the elongated medical device; and

a hydration opening into the lumen between the first and second ends of the sheath, the hydration opening being positioned so that a flushing fluid supplied to the hydration opening is supplied to the lumen near a middle of the sheath with a desired proportion of flow thereinto being directed toward the first and second ends of the sheath such that a first flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the distal end of the elongated medical device and a second flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the elongated medical device.

27. (New) A packaging method for a catheter comprising:

providing a catheter having a distal end and a proximal end;

providing a shipping packaging in the form of a tubular enclosure having a length corresponding to a length of the catheter and an inner diameter defining a lumen that is slightly greater than an outer diameter of the catheter, a first end of the tubular enclosure being adapted to receive the distal end; a second end of the tubular enclosure being adapted to receive the proximal end of the catheter;

providing the tubular enclosure with a hydration opening extending into the lumen between the first and second ends of the tubular enclosure, the hydration opening being

positioned so that a desired proportion of a flow of flushing fluid introduced into the lumen via the hydration opening enters the lumen near the middle of the catheter is directed toward the first and second ends of the enclosure such that a first flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the distal end of the catheter and a second flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the catheter; and

removably inserting the catheter into the lumen of the tubular enclosure.

28. (New) A catheter packaging comprising:

a tubular enclosure having a first end and a second end for removably protecting a catheter having a shaped distal tip and a proximal end, the tubular enclosure having a length corresponding to a length of the catheter and an inner diameter defining a lumen that is slightly greater than an outer diameter of the catheter; a first end of the tubular enclosure being adapted to receive the shaped distal tip distal end; a second end of the tubular enclosure being adapted to receive the proximal end of the catheter;

a hydration opening extending into the lumen between the first and second ends of the tubular enclosure, the hydration opening being positioned so that a desired proportion of a flow of a flushing fluid introduced into the lumen via the hydration opening enters the lumen near the middle of the tubular enclosure and is directed toward the first and second ends of the enclosure such that a first flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the distal end of the catheter and a second flow stream extends from the hydration opening to the proximal end of the catheter; and

an additional protective structure disposed at the first end of the tubular enclosure adapted to prevent crushing of the shaped distal tip.